



COPS Fact Sheet

COMMUNITY ORIENTED POLICING SERVICES
U.S. DEPARTMENT OF JUSTICE

www.cops.usdoj.gov

Universal Hiring Program Adding Officers to the Street

*"OUR CRIME RATE IS GOING DOWN
AND THE PEACE AND TRANQUILITY SO
LONG A TRADEMARK IN OUR
COMMUNITY ARE BACK. THIS HAS
BEEN THE MOST EFFECTIVE GRANT
THAT I HAVE SEEN IN MY 32 YEARS
IN THE PUBLIC SERVICE FIELD."*

POLICE COMMISSIONER

WILLIAM FLEET

ROME (NY) POLICE DEPARTMENT

The Universal Hiring Program (UHP) is one of several programs developed by the Office of Community Oriented Policing Services (COPS) to increase the number of officers on the beat. As state, local, and tribal law enforcement embrace the challenges of securing our homeland, this is now more important than ever.

A decade ago as crime was soaring, law enforcement officers were rushing from incident to incident. Today, nine years after the Violent Crime Control and Law Enforcement Act of 1994 was signed into law, officers are walking the beat again. Citizens now know the officers policing their neighborhoods. Officers and citizens are partnering to develop creative and innovative ways to deal with long-standing problems, as well as the emerging needs of homeland security and defense.

Supporting Local Law Enforcement

The COPS Office has awarded hiring grants through several programs over the course of its history. COPS formed the Universal Hiring Program in 1995 to supersede early programs such as Phase I; Accelerated Hiring, Education, and Deployment (AHEAD); and Funding Accelerated for Smaller Towns (FAST). UHP enables interested agencies to supplement their current sworn forces, or interested jurisdictions to establish a new agency, through three-year federal grants. To date, COPS has invested more than \$4.9 billion to hire over 66,000 law enforcement professionals through UHP and the hiring programs it superseded.

Funding Provisions

The National Strategy for Homeland Security, the Administration's roadmap for securing the homeland, highlights the key role that state and local governments play in responding to a terrorist attack. In addition, terrorism preparedness and prevention have become key responsibilities for state and local units. All policing agencies, as well as jurisdictions seeking to establish new policing agencies, are eligible to apply for this program. Priority consideration will be given to those applications that demonstrate a use of funds related to terrorism preparedness or response through community policing.

UHP grants cover up to 75 percent of the approved entry-level salary and benefits of each newly hired additional officer position over three years. There is a maximum federal contribution of \$75,000 per officer or deputy position over the three-year grant period. A minimum 25 percent local match is required. The match must be a cash match from funds not previously budgeted for any law enforcement purpose. Funding will begin once the new officers have been hired on or after the date of the award, and will be paid over the course of the grant.

Waivers of the local matching requirement may be requested under UHP, but will be granted only upon a showing of extraordinary fiscal hardship.

COPS offers a variety of publications, products, and training opportunities to advance community policing and support its grant programs. COPS publications and products offer insights and experiences from others in the field addressing specific problems including:

- ✓ Law Enforcement Responds to Terrorism: Lessons in Prevention and Preparedness
- ✓ Problem-Solving Tips: A Guide to Reducing Crime and Disorder Through Problem-Solving Partnerships
- ✓ COPS Collaboration Toolkit

COPS also sponsors training opportunities and conferences to give law enforcement professionals an opportunity to learn, network, and exchange ideas. COPS publications and training opportunities are posted at COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.

COPS grant funds must not be used to replace local funds that agencies otherwise would have devoted to sworn officer hiring. The hiring of officers under UHP must be in addition to, and not in lieu of, officers that otherwise would have been hired with local funds. All grant recipients must develop a written plan to retain any COPS-funded officer positions awarded for at least one full local budget cycle after federal funding has ended. This plan must be clearly specified in the *Retention Plan Certification* form that all applicants are required to submit at the time of their application.

Funding in Fiscal Year 2003

The COPS Office has approximately \$100 million available for UHP and plans to offer a new open solicitation in late April 2003.

Applications for UHP will be available at COPS Online in late April enabling interested parties to download the application.

Applications can also be requested by calling the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800.421.6770. Application kits will be mailed to interested parties as soon as they are available.

There is only one deadline, June 6, 2003, for this solicitation. All applications must be postmarked on or before that date to receive consideration. Applications postmarked after that date will not be reviewed. All grant awards are subject to the availability of funding.

Contact COPS

For more information, call the U.S. Department of Justice Response Center at 800.421.6770, or visit COPS Online at www.cops.usdoj.gov.